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C.I.A. Aide Says News Leaks in U.S. Worry Allies

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WASHINGTON, June 17 — The problem of leaks of sensitive information to the press is inherent in the American political system, but Frank C. Carlucci, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, says he believes leaks now are the worst he has seen in 23 years of Government service.

In an interview last week, he said a spate of leaks during the last year by former C.I.A. officers, current Pentagon officials and current members of the National Security Council and Congress had prompted "friendly foreign intelligence

services" to be more cautious in sharing secrets with the United States.

Recent leaks disclosed classified information about American relations with South Korea and Japan, new weapons systems and the identities of covert operatives of the C.I.A., he said, adding that some of the revelations had come about inadvertently through accidental releases under the Freedom of Information Act.

But Mr. Carlucci, a career Foreign Service officer who was appointed to his C.I.A. post in 1977, said he was much more concerned about the "erosion of the environment" for protecting national-security information. He said the erosion was caused by "leaks for policy reasons" by officials wishing to influence a course of action.

He said he was firmly opposed to "running one investigation after another" to try to find the source of the disclosures, which has usually been futile. Instead, he said, the solution was to reinstitute "a sense of values on the part of employees about what is proper and what isn't, emphasizing that while whistle-blowers have their place, legitimate grievance mechanisms and mechanisms for dissent exist."

Mr. Carlucci said the combination of deliberate leaks and accidental disclosures had prompted virtually every intelligence service that maintains relations with the C.I.A. to voice concern during the last eight months "about our ability to protect the information they give us."

"It isn't all one-sided," he said of the foreign complaints, explaining that Britain, West Germany and Australia were developing freedom-of-information laws and were "trying to profit by our experience."

But he went on to say that the gravity of the disclosure problem, underlined by C.I.A. compliance with about 4,000 requests a year under the information law, could be illustrated by a foreign intelligence chief "who told me he couldn't cooperate as much as he'd like, because of the disclosure practice."

Covert Operative Identified

A visiting British intelligence delegation recently told American authorities they needed new assurances that their se-

crets would not be compromised by the information law.

There was also a disturbing incident, Administration officials said, in which a covert operative of an American intelligence service was identified through Freedom of Information disclosures. "He got a knock on the door and his cover was blown," an official said.

Mr. Carlucci noted that some foreign intelligence services were so jumpy about the American disclosure practices that they had sharply curbed secret-sharing, even on matters where the C.I.A. knew they had certain valuable information.

"They don't say, 'We aren't going to give you X, Y, Z,'" he said. "That is not the way intelligence services work. But we do know of information in the possession of friendly services that was not given to us."

Mr. Carlucci said he and his aides, as well as officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, were working closely with Senate and House committees to draft new legislation increasing the Government's power to protect vital secrets. He said a draft bill might be ready by late next month.

"I am mildly optimistic that we can do something about the Freedom of Information Act problem and reasonably sure we can protect secrets," he said.

He said that he approved of the principles embodied in the 1974 law making it possible to obtain Government documents not protected by the security exemptions. But he said the C.I.A. had to commit 80 to 90 employees to the processing of such requests and received no extra funds for the purpose.

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